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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

OCI #0573/74

3 May 1974

POLAND

May Day, Polish Style

The predominant theme of the Warsaw May Day festivities was Polish national pride. The lead band played "Red Poppies at Monte Casino," the marching song of the Free Polish Brigade that fought with the British Army in Italy. Many groups of marchers were attired in national costumes and carried no political slogans--which were held to a minimum in any case. In a rare bow to capitalism, a few Coca-Cola signs were in evidence. Another band played a rousing rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In." Party chief Gierek of course dominated the proceedings, and in his speech stressed "respect for the sovereign rights of nations to decide their own fate."

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